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# CEREBUS

## RICK'S STORY

8

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227
FEB

# E X C E R P T

It goes without saying that institutions responsible for public culture and education must avoid even the semblance of impropriety. In the case of the New York Public Library, that semblance was gross — not only because of the extreme partisanship of the exhibition, its practice of censorship[1] and opposition to the free flow of ideas, and its attempt to indoctrinate young people who viewed it, but also because of the very particular circumstance that the library has benefited greatly from the laudable generosity of the Dorot Foundation of New York. The foundation, endowed by the late philanthropist D. Samuel Gottesman, made possible the restoration in 1984 of the D. Samuel and Jeane H. Gottesman Hall of the New York Public Library and established the Dorot Chief Librarianship of the library's Jewish division. Mr. Gottesman, however, had also contributed heavily to the purchase for Israel, through Yigael Yadin's personal mediation, of the four scrolls originally offered for sale by the Metropolitan of the Syrian Jacobite monastery of St. Mark. The heirs of the donor thereafter sponsored the construction of the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem, where the seven original Dead Sea Scrolls continue to be housed. The Dorot Foundation has since contributed generously to archaeological expeditions in Israel, and that it enjoys a close and fruitful relationship with the Israel Antiquities Authority is a matter of public knowledge.

The library's exhibit was in notable harmony with the Antiquities Authority's well-documented intentions. The Authority itself managed to make crystal clear, despite its own earlier disavowals, that its effort to keep the scrolls from the eyes of independent scholars had not been merely for the sake of protecting rights of the members of an "official" editorial team, but — more critically — was to discourage the spread of new ideas on the origin of the scrolls and the identification of their authors. Through its efforts, the Authority sought to protect the expressed beliefs of long-departed scholars whose memory was held to be sacred — a choice of conduct and action that remains inimical to the spirit of free inquiry. This holding operation necessarily meant turning away from an ethos of cogent historical understanding and religious openness that would have made the American scroll exhibitions worthy of emulation. [2] By its extreme acquiescence in the Authority's exhibition plans, the New York Public Library made a mockery of the principle of custodial impartiality, laid waste to the ideal of open debate as an essential ingredient in the enlightenment of the public and the search for truth, and gave comfort to the Authority's repressive policies regarding the rights of independent scholars to investigate and publish the scrolls. The vast majority of the nonspecialized audience streaming into the exhibition halls, and

*continued on last page*

CEREBUS
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**RICK'S STORY**
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(Cerebus 220 to Cerebus 231)

MONTHLY
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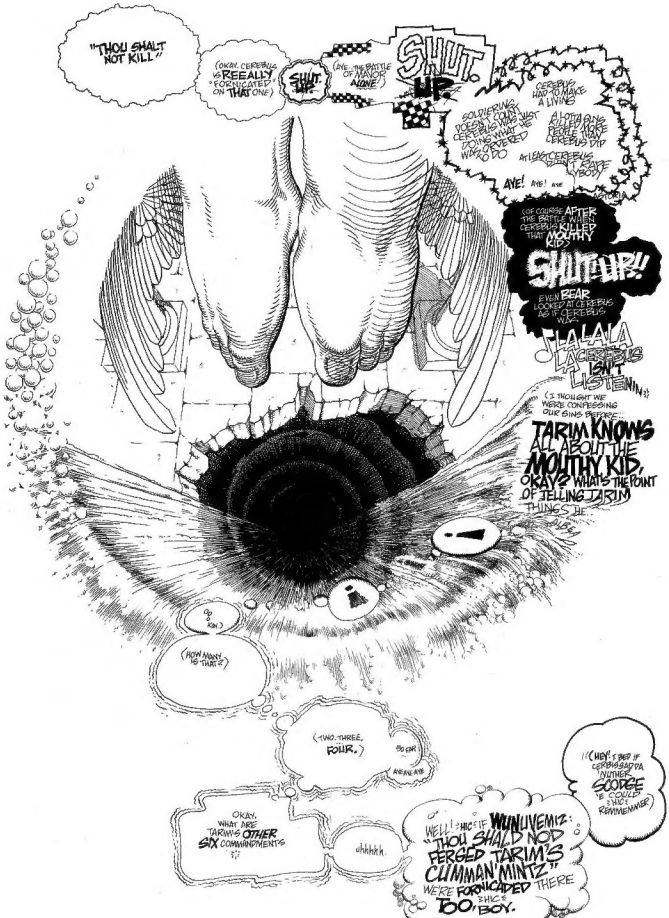
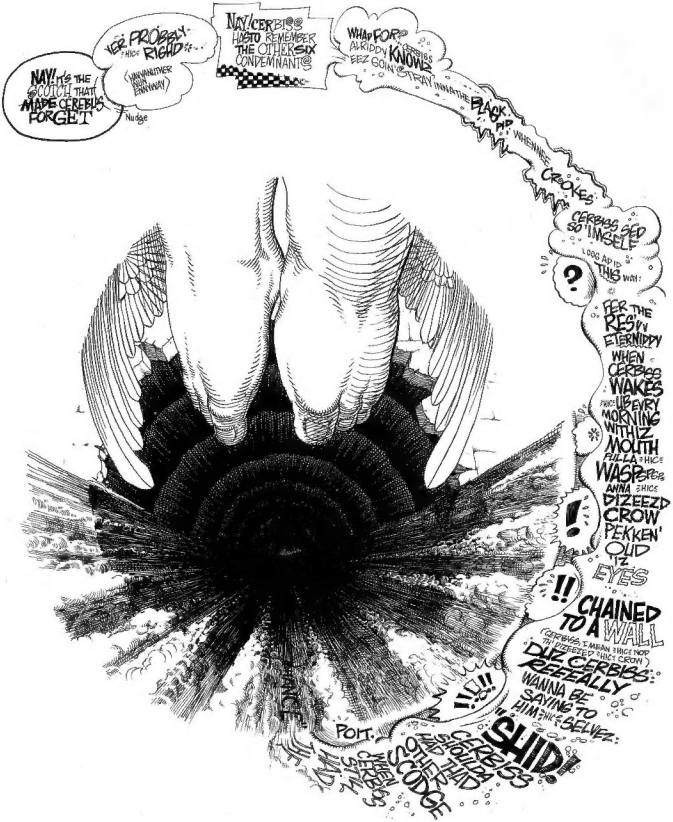

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"
(OKAY, CERBERUS IS REEALLY FORNICATED ON THAT ONE)
SHUT THE
(AYE... THE BATTLE OF LOWER NONE)
SHUT. UP.
CERBERUS HAD TO MAKE A LIVING
COURIER RINGS, PICKED UP MAIL FROM CERBERUS, WHAT'S IN THE BOX? NOTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
A LITTLE OLD LADY FROM ABOVE PICKED UP THE DIP
AH LEAVE CERBERUS ALONE, I SAID!
AYE! AYE! AYE!
OF COURSE AFTER THE BATTLE WHEN CERBERUS KICKED THAT BIG MOUTHY KIDS
SHUT! UP!
BEAR EVEN PET AT CERBERUS AS IF CERBERUS WAS
LA LA LA LACERBERUS ISN'T LISTENIN!!
(S THOUGHT WE WERE CONFESSING OUR SINS BEFORE
TARIM KNOWS ALL ABOUT THE MOUTHY KID, OKAY? WHAT'S THE POINT OF TELLING TARIM THINGS HE
(OH, KAY.)
(HOW MANY IS THAT?)
(TWO. THREE. FOUR.)
SO FOR REAL AND
OKAY, WHAT ARE TARIM'S OTHER SIX COMMANDMENTS
uhhhhh
WELL, IF HE WUNUVEMIZ: "THOU SHALD NOD FERGED TARIM'S CUMMAN'MINTZ" WE'RE FORNICADED THERE TOO, SHICK BOY.
(HEH'S BEST IF CERBERUS SAD'VA MUTHER SCORSE IF COULD SHOT REMEMBER)


NAY! IT'S THE SCOTCH THAT MAKES CERBUS FORGET
YEE PROBLY RIGHT *HIC*...
(MMMMLIVER AND ENNYWAY)
Nudge
NAY! CERBUS HAS TO REMEMBER THE OTHER SIX COVENENANTS
WHAP FOR? AKIDDY KNOWS EEZ GOIN TO TRY
WHERE'S THE BLACK PIP
CROAKES
CERBUS SED SO IMSELF
LOAD AP IN THIS WIN!
?
FER THE RES'N ETERNIDDY
WHEN CERBUS WAKES UP EVERY MORNING WITH IZ MOUTH FULLA *HIC* WASPERS AN'NA *HIC* DIZEEZD CROW PEKKEN' OUD IZ EYES
!
!!
CHAINED TO A WALL
(CERBUS, I MEAN, *HIC* NOD IT'S DIZEEZD *HIC* CROW)
DUZ CERBUS REELLY WANNA BE SAYING TO HIMSELVEZ:
!!!
SHID!
POHT.
CERBUS
OTHER
SCODGE
CERBUS
PANIC

CEREBUS HAS TO GET OUT OF HERE
AYE! AYE AYE!!
AS LONG AS RICK'S DATE WITH JOANNE GOES OKAY, RICK WILL ASK HER TO MARRY HIM AND...
WHO? IS CEREBUS KIDDING? RICK IS GOING TO CALL HER A DEVIL AND A VIPER AND A SCORPION OR TELL HER TO GO ON AND BEAT IT AND SCRAM
CEREBUS HAS TO FACE IT: CEREBUS BLEW HIS ONE CHANCE TO GET RID OF GIRLY-BOY
AND NOW CEREBUS IS STUCK WITH HIM FOR-EVER*
THAT'S TERRIBLE
CEREBUS SHOULD'VA NUTHER SCOOGE TO
SHUT. UP!
TWITCH
CEREBUS IS STUCK WITH GIRLY-BOY FOREVER
(HE SHAVED OFF HIS BEARD... WHY DID HE SHAVE OFF HIS BEARD? IT WAS THE ONLY MANLY THING ABOUT HIM (CHUT) (CHUT) (CHUT)
JOANNE IS GOING TO LAUGH HERSELF SICK!)
YUP
MIGHT JULIET AS WELL GET USED TO IT
CEREBUS IS STUCK HERE WITH GIRLY-BOY FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE
AND SOME DAY WHEN CEREBUS IS OLD AND WRINKLED
CEREBUS' HEART WILL STOP BEATING
AND THAT OLD BLOCK PIT WILL OPEN UP
AND SWEEP CEREBUS

HI, AGAIN.
I'M GOING TO POUR MYSELF A STOUT
YOU WANT SOMETHING?
!!
AYE NAY aye NAY AYE nay AYE NAY AYE
LEAF
COMIN' RIGHT UP
AYE. A SCOTCH. PLEASE.
WAY IS HE BACK SO SOON?
HE SCREWED IT UP!
(CERBERUS KNEW HE WOULD SCREW IT UP.)
BUT...? HE DOESN'T LOOK UNHAPPY!
NAH NAH NAH
DID HE...SLEEP WITH HER?...ALREADY?!
1 AYE
AYE
AYE
(REMEMBER THE FIRST NIGHT WITH JOANNE?)
DON'T BE STUPID JOANNE WOULDN'T JUST SLEEP WITH HIM... (NOT WITHOUT TALKING HIM TO DEATH AFTERWARDS ANYWAY...)
THANKS.
YOU'RE WELCOME
SO...
WHAT HAPPENED?
I TWISTED MY ANKLE ON THE FRONT STEP AT THE STARCHILD
FEELS OKAY NOW, THOUGH
I THINK THE WALK BACK HERE WAS JUST WHAT IT NEEDED

OH! JOANNE! RIGHT!
NAY.
CEREBUS MEANT: WHAT HAPPENED WITH JOANNE?
(HEH) ALMOST FORGOT! WHY I WENT OVER THERE
IT WAS(?) (a)
IT WAS WEIRD
I MEAN- I THOUGHT IT WAS A DATE... (YOU KNOW - JUST THE TWO OF US?)
BUT (HA!) SHE-- SHE WAS SITTING AT A TABLE WITH THIS GUY NAMED TONY
HAHAHA!
HA
OHHHHHH...
TOBY!
THE MAGICIAN!
MMMMM.. NO? NOOOO--
I'M PRETTY SURE HIS NAME IS TONY.
HE'S A DRUMMER!
THEY'RE- ALL DRUMMERS.
SO THEN WHAT HAPPENED?
"THEN WHAT HAPPENED?" Uhhh-- HMM. (LET ME SEE)
WE TALKED ABOUT MUSIC FOR A WHILE AAAAND?
OH, RIGHT! THEN JOANNE AND TONY STARTED TALKING ABOUT THIS PARTY THEY WERE AT A WHILE AGO
SO I FINISHED MY PINT, I SAID IT LOOKED AS IF THEY HAD A LOT TO TALK ABOUT--
I WISHED THEM BOTH A GOOD NIGHT...
AND I LEFT...
TWITCH
SEE-- THAT WAS WHEN I TWISTED MY ANKLE...
JUST ON THE BO STEP. THERE'S TI CHUNK MISSIN

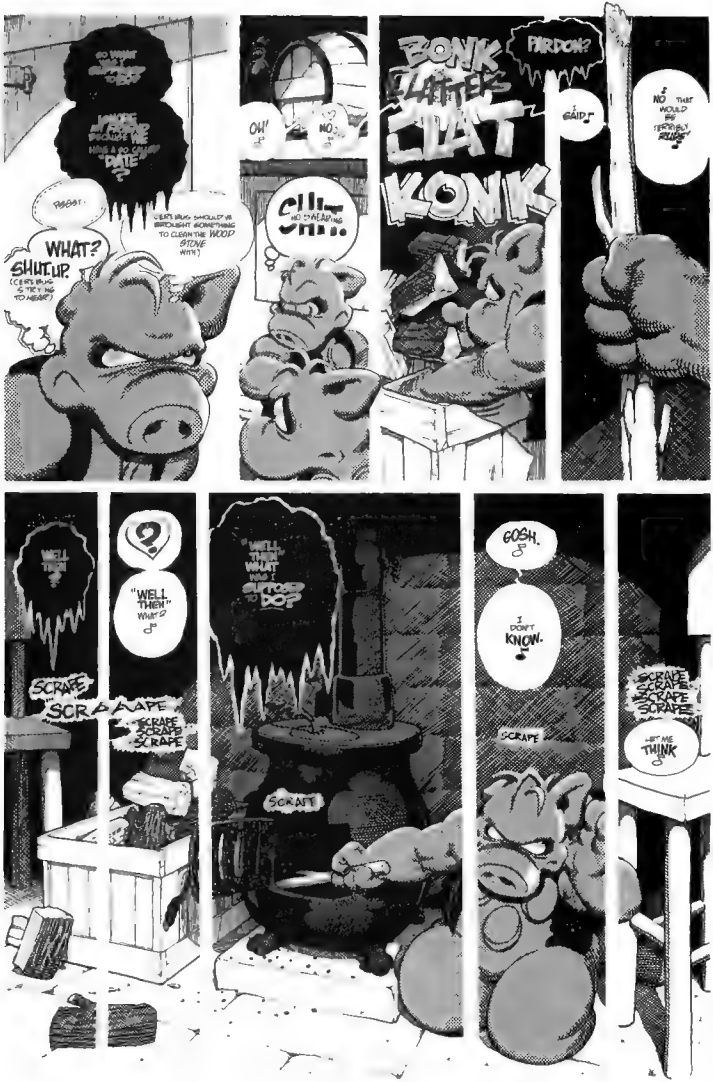
ARE. YOU... IN LOVE?
?
I DON'T THINK SO...
WHY WOULD YOU...
JOANNE ISN'T SLEEPING WITH TOBY THE MAGICIAN
?
HE'S JUST HER FRIEND?
BUT- I NEVER THOUGHT SHE WAS SLEEPING WITH HIM.
BUT YOU LEFT!
SO NOW JOANNE THINKS THAT YOU'RE JEALOUS OF TOBY THE MAGICIAN
?!
SHE DOES?!
OF COURSE SHE DOES
DIDN'T YOU LEARN ANYTHING FROM "THE WISE RULER AND THE LUNATIC"?
YOU HAVE TO SMILE ALL THE TIME-- AND SAY EVERYTHING IN A MUSICAL VOICE
?
BUT- BUT I DID
I SMILED THE WHOLE TIME AND I SAID:
LOOKS AS IF YOU TWO HAVE A LOT TO TALK ABOUT
GOOD NIGHT JOANNE
GOOD NIGHT TONY
IT WAS A VERY NICE MEETING YOU
THUNK
?
OKAY.
CEREALS
HAS A QUESTION:
WHY.

DID YOU COME STRAIGHT BACK HERE.
OH! I HAD A LOT OF TIME TO THINK ON MY WAY OVER THERE
AND I THOUGHT OF SOMETHING I WANTED TO ASK YOU ABOUT
SOMETHING YOU WANTED TO ASK CERBERUS ABOUT
AYE!
WHAT DO YOU WANT TO ASK CERBERUS ABOUT.
CERBERUS DOESN'T WANT TO KNOW..
SHUT UP CERBERUS KNOWS THAT
"SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND"
I STARTED THINKING ABOUT IT AS AN EXAMPLE OF ETHICAL ADVICE
AND THE MORE I THOUGHT ABOUT IT, THE MORE I REALIZED THAT IT WAS TOO AMBIGUOUS TO BE ETHICAL ADVICE..
(HERE'S WHAT I MEAN)
LET'S SAY THAT I'M AN UNWISE RULER AND I DECIDE TO SEEK MORE POWER
WELL, IT SEEMS OBVIOUS THAT IF I'M AN UNWISE RULER, MORE POWER IS THE LAST THING I SHOULD BE SEEKING AND THE WORST THING I COULD FIND
..BUT MY QUESTION ISN'T ABOUT THE UNWISE RULER..
MY QUESTION WAS ABOUT THE PERSON GIVING THE (SO-CALLED) "ETHICAL ADVICE"..
ISN'T THE ADVICE-GIVER AT LEAST PARTLY TO BLAME IF THE UNWISE RULER DECIDES TO SEEK "MORE POWER" ON THE BASIS OF THAT ADVICE?
AND IF SO
KLIK KLAK
THUMP

JOANNE!
HI.
HI
LISTEN.
WHY ARE YOU SO MAD AT ME?
?!
UHHH...
I'M NOT MAD AT YOU
YEAH?
THEN WHY DID YOU ONLY STAY FOR ONE DRINK?
OHHH THAT.
AS I WAS JUST TELLING CERESUS...
I THOUGHT (HEH HEH)
I THOUGHT
SNICK?
GLP
THMP
I THOUGHT WE HAD A DATE!
HAHAHAH
UH?
YOU KNOW? JUST THE TWO OF US?
BUT, WHEN I SAW YOU SITTING WITH TONY

HA! I DON'T THINK YOUR LEAVING HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH OUR SO-CALLED "DATE"
I THINK you're JUST JEALOUS OF TONY
BECAUSE HE'S A MUSICIAN
AND YOU'RE JUST A WRITER
WHOWWW
THAT IS SO AMAZING
THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT YOU SAID SHE WOULD THINK
AH HEM
WOULD? (AHEM) WOULD YOU LIKE A GLASS OF WHITE WINE?
NO. THANK. YOU.

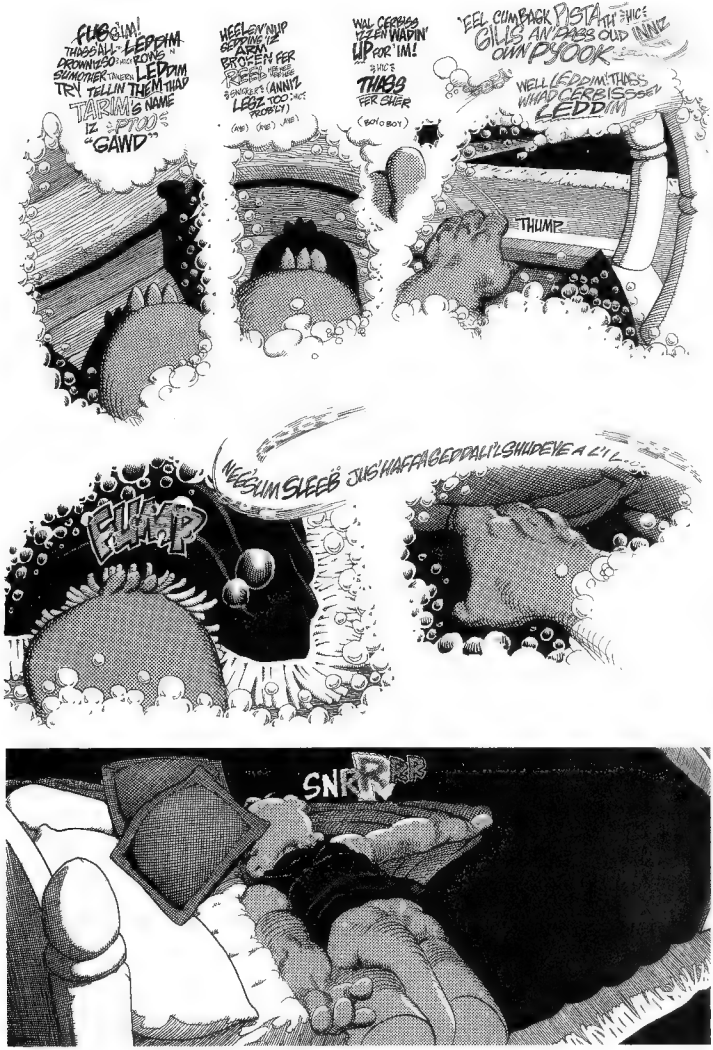
OH!
UHH...
WELL!
IF YOU TWO WILL EXCUSE CEREBUS -- CEREBUS HAS TO
UHHHH
CRAK
CLEAN THE WOOD STOVE
AYE. THAT'S IT...
THE WOODSTOVE IS A MESS AND CEREBUS HAS TO CLEAN.
IT.
SO YOU TWO JUST HAVE A NICE
UH
CHAT!
AND DON'T WORRY, YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW CEREBUS IS
UH
PLEASE DON'T LET HIM SCREW IT UP
PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE

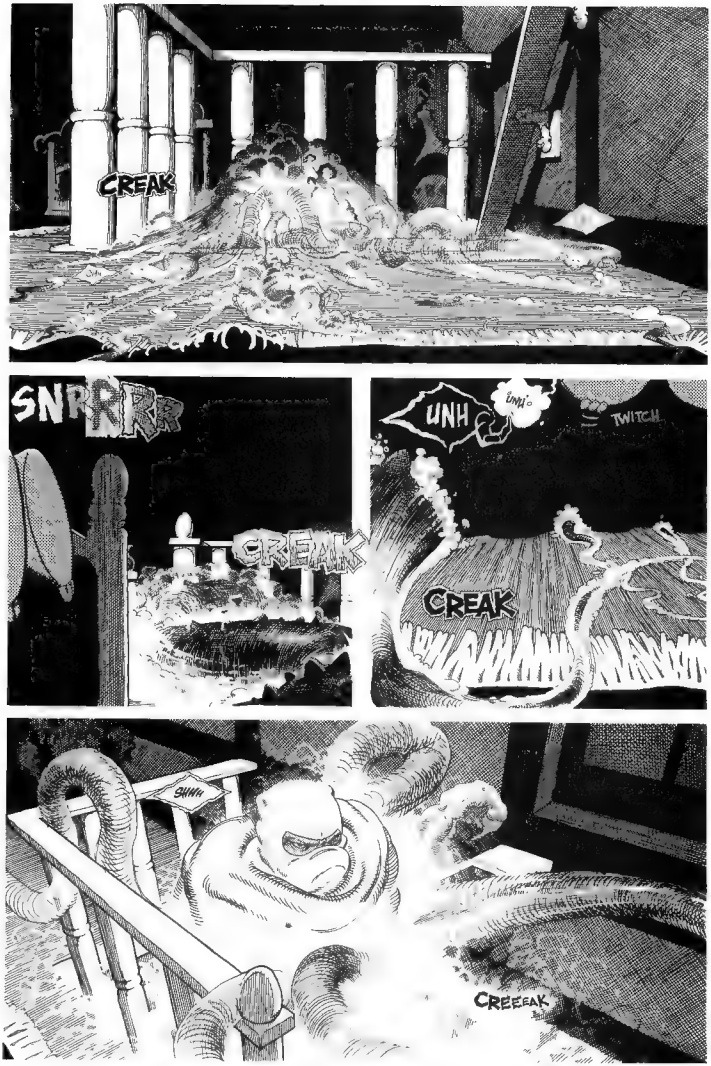

SO WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHERE DID YOU HAVE A PO CALLED "DATE"?
PSSST.
WHAT? SHUT UP.
(CAT'S BUG SHOULD'VE BEEN BROUGHT SOMETHING TO CLEAN THE HOOP STONE WITH.)
OH!
NO.
SHIT.
NO STEALING.
BONK
CLATTER
CLAT
KONK
PARDON?
GAIP.
NO THAT WOULD BE TERRIBLY RUDE.
WELL THEN?
"WELL THEN" WHAT?
SCRAPE
SCRAAAPE
SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE
"WELL THEN" WHAT WAS I SUPPOSED TO DO?
SCRAFT
GOSH.
I DON'T KNOW.
SCRAPE
SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE
LET ME THINK

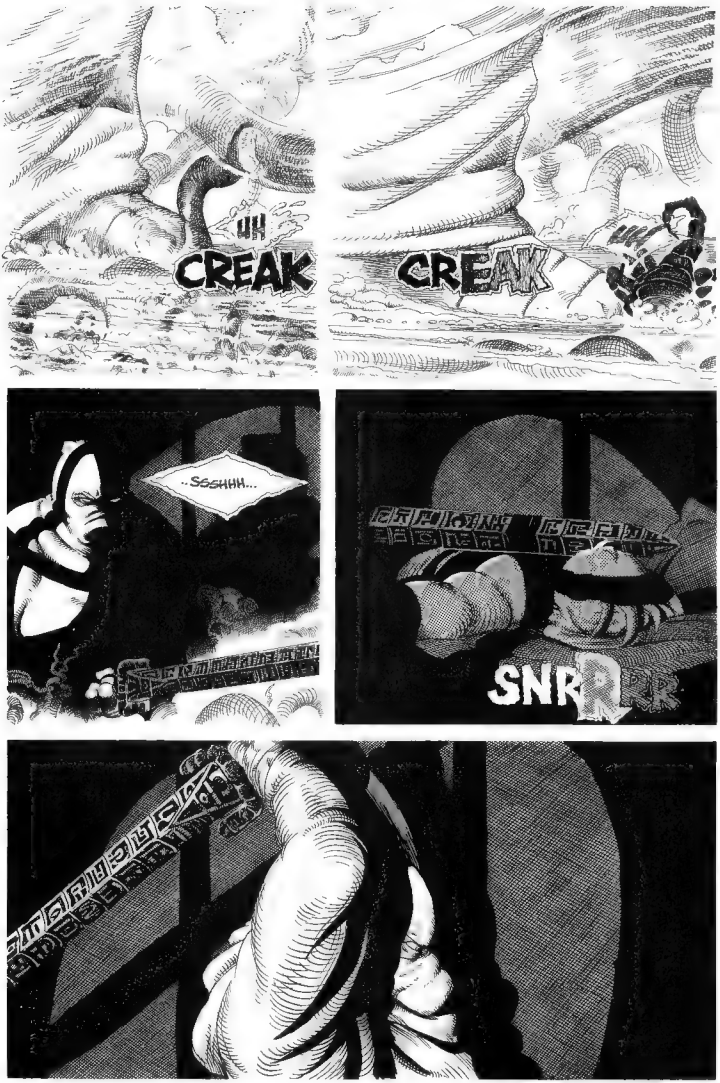
WHEW!
SOME DAY
WE DID HAVE A PHONE
MAYBE IT WOULD BE EASIER FOR US TO TALK AND GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER A LITTLE BETTER
IF WE WENT SOMEWHERE WHERE NEITHER OF US KNOWS ANYONE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
OH YES VERY MUCH
SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
SCRAPE
WELL
MAYBE
IN THAT CASE
WE COULD JUST GO FOR A WALK!
SCRAPE
SCRA
WALK
UH-HUH!
JUST THE TWO OF US

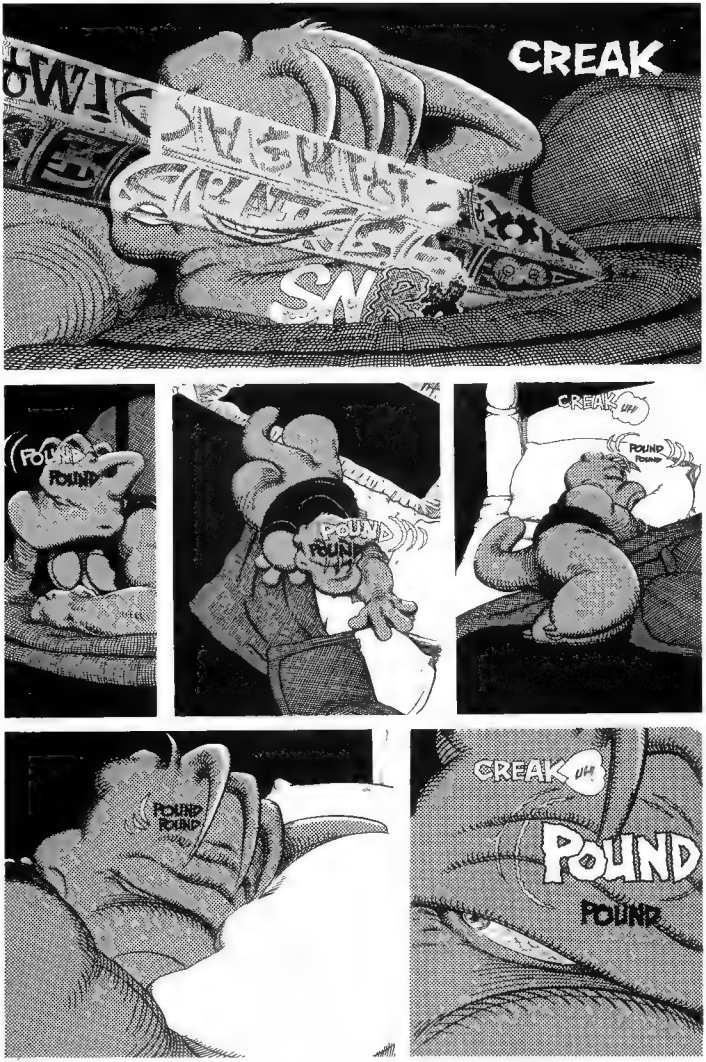
SIGH
RIP
GIRLY
BOY
HK
OKAY
LET'S
GO
FOR A
"WALK"
SNAP
THUD
KAK
GREAT!
JUST LET ME TELL CERBERUS THAT WE'RE LEAVING
AND

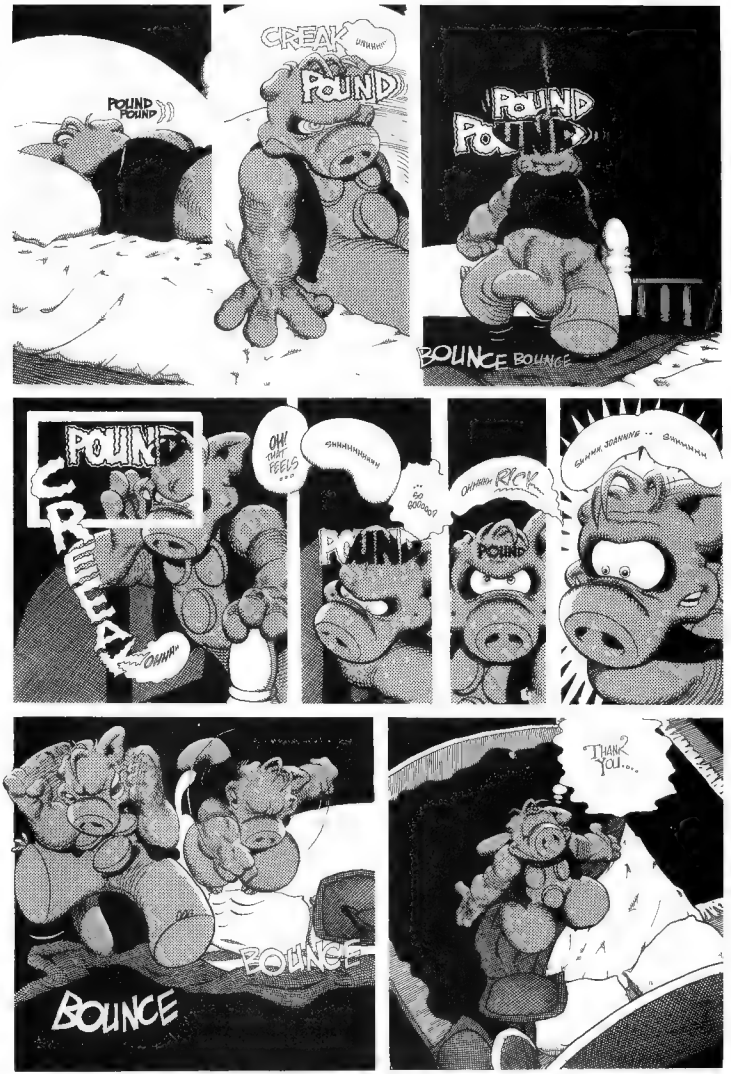
ARE YOU KIDDING?
HE'S CROUCHED DOWN BACK THERE LISTENING TO EVERY WORD
AREN'T YOU?... "BIG EARS"
FOOMP
NOW, DO YOU WANT TO GO FOR A "WALK" OR NOT!
UH!
AYE! YES!
STOMP STOMP STOMP
STOMP
STOMP STOMP STOMP STOMP
CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP
JOANNE?
CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP
HEY! WAIT UP!
CLOMP CLOMP CLOMP
DON'T WALK SO FAST!
THE NERVE OF THAT SLUT
"BIG EARS" HAH
"THIS IS CERBERUS' TAVERN"
(THAT'S WHAT CERBY SHOULD'VE SAID!)
AYE AYE AYE
"IT'S CERBERUS' JOB TO... MAKE SURE"
("MAKE SURE" WHAT?)
THAT?! THAT'S IT! NO ONE IS CAUSING TROUBLE OR DOING WRONG THINGS
LIKE EAVESDROPPING?
SHUT UP
A "WALK" HAH!
BREAKFAST NOW!
LIKE THIS GONNA WERK
GIRL! BOY'LL BE BACK MANY TIMES NIMMID
CERBIES CAN EARN NOTHIN'
"WAAAAAH! JOANNIE BROKEN LUV MES, MOS' TIMES HOLEE"
"WHATDAM I GONNA DOOOO?"
"GROW A THICK SPINE AN' SOME THICK BALLZ" THASS WHAT CERBISSULL TELLUM
(BOOMBOOM)
THASS TH' THING
SHE HAZZENGOODENUFF BALLZ T' GEDDEM SLOT LIKE JOWAAN
Y'GODDA BE LIKE CERBIES 'N SAY "JOWAAN? YOU WANNA GO UPSTAIRS WITH CERBISS. YES OR NO?"
(THASS THICK NOT HOWDY HAPPENIN' "JOWAAN WUZ THE HUN WHO SHUDDUP SMAK
OW.

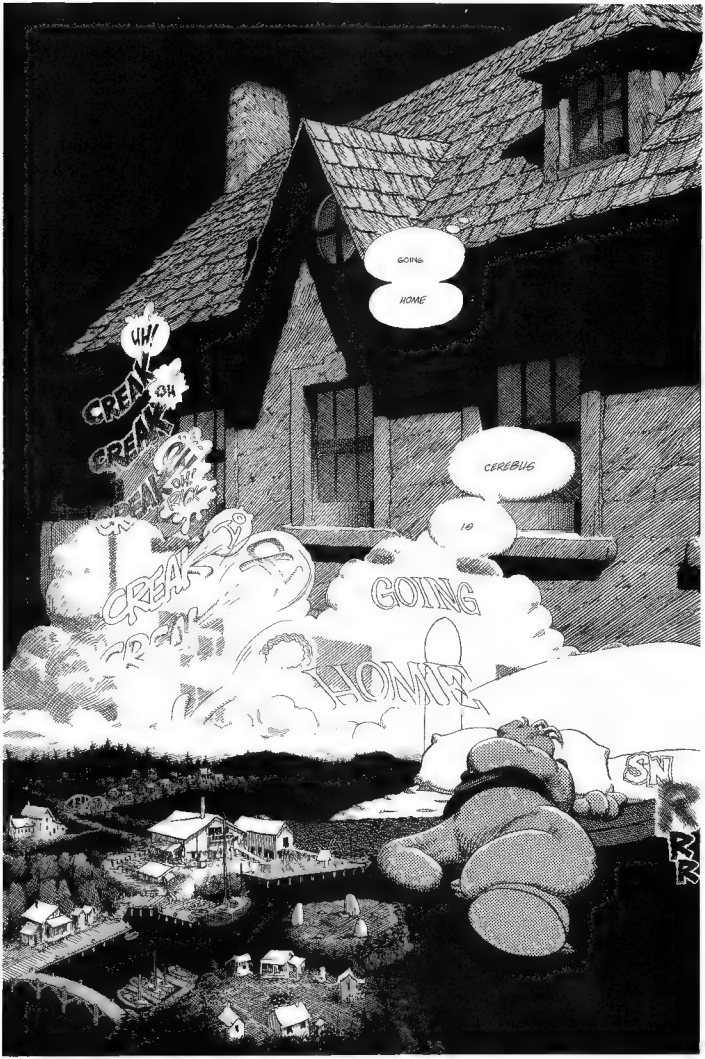

FUS GUM! THASS ALL LEDDIM DROWNED SO SUMOTHER RONS TRY TELLIN THEM WAD TARIM'S NAME IZ "GAWD"
HEELSIV'NUP GEDDING 'IZ ARSN' BROKEN FER REEL (HIC) SINCE'S 'ANNIZ LEGZ TOO (HIC) PROBLY
WAL GEDDAS 'IZEEN WADIN' UP FOR 'IM! (HIC) THASS FER SHER (BOI O BOY)
'EEL CUM BACK PISTA (HIC) GILLS AN' BASS OUD OVN PYOOK (HIC)
WELL LEDDIM THASS WHAD CERBISSED LEDDIM
THUMP
WEESUM SLEEB JUS' HAFFA GEDDALI'L SHUDEVE A LI'L..
SNRRRRP


CREAK
SNRRRR
CREAK
UNH
UNH?
TWITCH
CREAK
SHHH
CREEEAK


CREAK
CREAK
SSSHHH...
SNR


CREAK
POUND
POUND
POUND
POUND
CREAK UH!
POUND
POUND
POUND
POUND
CREAK UH!
POUND
POUND


POUND POUND
CREAK
UHHHHH
POUND
POUND POUND
BOUNCE BOUNCE
POUND
URRRRR
OHH!
THAT FEELS
...
SHHHHHHHHH
...
SO GOOOOD
POUND
OHHHHH RICK...
POUND
GAHHH JOANNNE ~
BOUNCE
BOUNCE
THANK YOU...


GOING
HOME
UH!
CREAK
CREAK
OH!
CEREBUS
IS
GOING
HOME
SN
RR

# MAMA'S BOY

"Mama's Boy" as a term of derision implies no derision against mothers.

A lot of mothers — I suspect, mine included — tend to disbelieve that. Any guy could tell you that it is true, however. A "mama's boy" is not something that any guy would want to be, but that is up to him to decide, which is what the term "mama's boy" is really all about.

A mother is a mother. In the course of writing *Mothers and Daughters*, I had a lot of time to think about the nature of a mother, particularly when I began investigating the underpinnings of the obsession with safety that, it seems to me, is at the very core of every mother.

Let's take, as an example, a very high place without railings or barricades. Let's say, twenty-three floors up. Now, how close would you allow yourself to get to the edge? Sheer drop. Twenty-three floors straight down. Splat. The odds are your answer could be measured in feet, not inches, yards not feet, possibly "Are you *kidding*? Get me down from here," and not yards. Even the bravest souls are going to be lying if they say, "Right up to the edge." Even if they're not lying, they would have to add: "On my hands and knees and very, very carefully."

Now. Why is that? My own personal theory is that it has to do with the part of our brains, a separate self, whom we do not trust. In observing our own behaviours over the course of our lives, we have seen that separate self, that stupid self, do way too many stupid things to trust him (or, perhaps in your case, her) that close to a sheer drop of twenty-three storeys. The same reason a lot of people can't stand anywhere close to the edge of a subway platform, whether the train is coming in or not. I would also maintain that the more things that you do which are self-destructive and inexplicable to yourself, the more you are apt to suffer from this condition and the further you want to be away from the edge of any sheer drop. I would suspect that women suffer from this condition more than men do, but feel free to disbelieve that last part if you're a big Xena fan.

The part of our brains that we don't trust would seem to be founded on pure experience and speculation on pure experience. It is an irrefutable fact that plunging from a height of twenty-three storeys would be a remarkable experience — seeing the ground rushing up at you, experiencing the adrenaline rush of hurtling through space at superhuman speeds. To quote Bob Burden, "I know how to fly, even if it is straight down." I think any mother could tell you that the part of the brain that seeks out pure experience is well-developed before any issue of safety or caution enters into the equation. It is really up to the mother to develop that sense of safety and caution in a small boy which doesn't naturally exist. The most effective way to do that is with fear, to make him afraid, to introduce consequence as a contributing reality in human existence and — where necessary — to magnify consequence as a way of reinforcing the lesson.

"Come down from there — you'll break your neck," "You could've been killed," etc., etc.

I think it is very easy for a mother to lose any sense of degree in her concern for safety as an absolute. That is, I think many mothers do such an effective job of using fear to modify behaviour that they end up creating boys who are unreasonably fearful of virtually everything. They are afraid of germs, afraid of bullies, afraid of dogs, afraid of heights, afraid of being alone, afraid, afraid, afraid. They are bound with cast-iron apron strings. The boy becomes afraid on his mother's behalf, as well. He is aware that he is the mere custodian of his physical body, that his mother has entrusted it to him, and that if any physical harm comes to it while he is in sole custody of it, he will have let his mother down, wounded her, and *that* becomes one of his biggest fears.

In the masculine world you are (or *were*, anyway) expected to get past that. Boys who aspired to be men took it as a given that their mothers were overly cautious. They all loved their mothers very, very dearly. The fact that you knew not to drag the other guy's mother into an exchange of insults — unless you were prepared to escalate the exchange into a physical fight — was evidence of that. In the sorting-out process, however, adhering to every one of your mother's prohibitions was proof positive that you were a coward — you were *too* afraid. You were using your mother as an excuse to not be brave, braver, or at least less afraid. Everyone was in the same boat if there was a challenge to be met: jumping from a little too great a height or over a greater expanse than usual. *No* one's mother would be happy seeing her son do it. It is the whole point of the exercise: to prove that you have a level of individual bravery, an ability to take a calculated risk, to meet a challenge. Another step on the way for a boy becoming a man.

What separates a boy who will become a man from a "mama's boy" who will stay a boy has a great deal to do with the extent to which he can overcome the fear that she has instilled in him. To most mothers — to most women — bravery is synonymous with stupidity. If there is no discernible reason why you should jump from too great a height or across a greater than usual expanse, then it is just a stupid thing to do so. To a boy who wants to be a man, the risk of getting a little banged up, twisting your ankle, or getting a nice big bruise is more than outweighed by your willingness to take the chance, to put yourself in harm's way to a small degree to prove to others — but primarily to yourself — that you have what it takes, you have the right stuff, or, at the very least, you are building an inventory of "challenges met" which will serve you in

good stead if a real challenge should come along. No question a lot of guys go too far in trying to prove that they are the bravest of the brave. That's part of the sorting-out process as well — finding out for yourself where the borderline between bravery and stupidity exists, where you exist in the spectrum between "coward" and "fool."

Which brings me (finally!) to David Groenewegen's question about "what would a generation of Cirinist-era men be like?" I think many of the examples that he used point up the inadequacy of the blanket supposition. From what I have read of John Lennon, he was indeed a "mama's boy," very much attached to his mother, Julia. He was also a "toff." He certainly did not shy away from the demands of the sorting-out process. Nor could he have, considering what sort of an environment Liverpool was and is. I think most of David's examples — most examples of the over-achiever "mama's boy" — would fall very much into the conventional masculine pattern. They loved their mothers, revered their mothers, but knew very quickly that they could not conduct their life in such a way that if their mother was watching what they were doing minute by minute, she would be completely at peace with it. Even the most extreme example of a "mama's boy" anytime before 1970 (let's say) would still have been subjected to and willingly participated in the sorting-out process. There simply wasn't any other choice. He would either be brave to one degree or another, or he would have bravery thrust upon him in the form of a challenge from the bigger boys.

I think the danger that I see most often in this day and age is that it has become far more possible for a boy to grow up essentially and completely feminized. I think this is particularly true of day-care centres and a school system that has so completely abandoned any notion of discipline (at least in any definition of the term that I would acknowledge) that such feminization seems inevitable. It seems to me that there has been an extension of "*safety über alles*" to a ridiculous extreme. I certainly can't fault the nobility of the motive. I think it springs from an opposing view of the nature of a human being. A maternal-dominant society is going to see babies as immaculate, beatific, intrinsically noble and good creatures. If they can be kept safe from anything that is not immaculate, beatific, intrinsically noble and good in the course of their upbringing, voilà, you end up with an immaculate, beatific, intrinsically noble and good adult. I think any Saturday afternoon spent at the mall or a family-values environment will refute the argument. What you end up with are undisciplined, wilful, noisy, destructive, self-obsessed little balls of Id protoplasm. Safe as houses, to be sure. Not only in no danger of being struck by a parent, slapped by a parent, spanked by a parent, but in no danger of being chastised by a parent, of hearing a word of discouragement from a parent. In point of fact, the only danger of bruising seems to come from being pled with, reasoned with too earnestly. Having asserted the maternal-dominant theory society-wide that children are in no way, at no time, and under no circumstance to experience any kind of physical pain directed at them by a parent (with which I agree), society seems to me to have hurtled along a trajectory from the point of that decision. Yelling is out, since it can bruise infant sensibilities and instil life-long traumas. So the children yell and the parents talk in hushed and modulated tones, "reasoning with" a bundle of Id protoplasm that is hurling itself bodily to and fro and shrieking at the top of its lungs. Of course in my experience, the parents are not usually *reasoning* with the child at all. They are either threatening it or bribing it with material possessions or privileges. So, it seems to me that the philosophical undercarriage comes off the vehicle at that point. The child is not learning reason, it is learning bribery and threats. A beloved toy will be taken away for a period of time or a trip to a favoured environment will be postponed. Materialism unviolated becomes evidence of good behaviour. Materialism divided becomes evidence of bad behaviour. But the focus is on material possessions, instead of the development of a sense of right and wrong. It is right to accurately perceive yourself as just another human being who is expected to be well-behaved. It is wrong to perceive of yourself as the centre of the universe whose wilfulness has to be catered to.

I see this as being extended into the education system. Failure is traumatic, so the choice has been made to eliminate the likelihood of failure. "Grading against the curve" to me is a polite euphemism for "eliminate all standards." A good high-jump event is one in which the bar has been lowered to a point where everyone can clear it. A good curriculum is one whereby everyone gets a passing grade and the majority are judged to be excellent. If the class troglodyte can get a 95, you've really accomplished something.

I don't think the net effect has been what was hoped for. Far from having a world made up of immaculate, beatific, intrinsically noble and good adults because they have been kept safe from any trauma — physical or emotional or spiritual — every step along the way, I think we are producing and continue to produce a world of adults who are obsessed with the fact that they "feel bad." What a conundrum! When you engineer a society whose primary purpose is to make sure that no one is made to "feel bad" ever, the vast majority end up "feeling bad": materialists unsatisfied with their material goods, secular humanists who either believe in nothing or who eventually believe in everything sequentially, one belief at a time, compulsive "carers" whose caring is the source of profound emotional pain, adults kept safe, safe, safe throughout their upbringing and who are terrified, terrified, terrified. Bravery having been dispensed with, belittled out of existence by the least-brave who have labelled anything short of absolute safety to be absolute stupidity, I think the result is inescapable: profound societal terror, the magnification of apprehension into anxiety, anxiety into fear, and fear into terror. With no sorting-out process, no incremental challenges met, no inclination or ability to push individual limits of endurance and capability, whole generations of males haven't the first clue as to who or what they are, since they have grown up in a structure where their only measure of themselves is in

female terms: how sensitive, how caring, how compassionate, how environmentally aware, how safe they are. Every other measure of maleness — forget masculinity — is deemed irrelevant and stupid. The only thing that can possibly fill that vacuum, in my view, is apprehension, anxiety, fear, and terror in varying degrees of severity.

Well, not the only thing. The problem of course is that I find it very difficult to discuss these issues without looking at where and how they have permeated so much of society outside of the home. I am sure that there are many good and effective day-care custodians abroad in the land, most — if not all — of them women. I'm certainly in no position to judge their performance sight unseen (and I do fervently hope that it remains an unseen sight for myself). I'm sure that if the sorting-out process has not been eliminated, it has certainly been curtailed in the interests of safety. I can't say for certain that whatever has replaced it is wholly and completely inadequate. But I would be willing to bet that whatever system (or systems) has been introduced would be, at the very least, peculiar, having as its underpinning the interchangeability of the male and female genders. Doubtless little girls are being raised to be little boys to the same extent that little boys are being raised to be little girls with much resultant confusion all the way around with the possible exception of those little boys and little girls who are genetically predisposed to the borderland areas of gender (as it were). If little boys are being raised to be safe, to not take chances, to know nothing of their place (apart from being Mother's and Surrogate Mother's Little Prince), to be terrified of much that warrants smaller fear, and to be fearful of much that warrants no more than mild apprehension, well, they at least find themselves in a world better suited to their nature. Since bravery is not, for the most part, necessary, it would seem that an exaggerated sense of fearfulness is not the most helpful bit of baggage to be carrying around in a world which has been made — if not absolutely safe — at the very least considerably safer. I was thinking to myself a while ago as I was walking in downtown Kitchener and I had passed the umpty-umpth apprehensive pedestrian who was eyeing me warily, fearfully (since I am large enough and fit enough to look as if I could do severe bodily injury to most of the people that I pass on the street), I was thinking: How often do they get that apprehensive, wary, fearful look on their faces? How afraid are they? Are they afraid every waking minute of the day? It seemed to me that they were and are. And that seems so completely unnecessary to me.

I hope I'm not telling tales out of school here, but my mother is a very fearful person. I think most mothers are, for the reason that I outlined: they are so fearful on behalf of their children that they have an inclination to make *themselves* permanently fearful. I think my mother is less afraid than she used to be. I certainly hope so. As I said to her once (quoting something I had read somewhere): "The great thing about being permanently fearful is that your fear will eventually be justified." That is, if you are fearful or apprehensive or anxiety-ridden every waking minute of every day for five years or ten years, eventually something bad will happen to prove that you weren't worried for nothing. I can understand women being cautious, taking care, taking pains with their safety. I can even understand if such caution gets out of their control and makes them fearful, visibly fearful, wherever they go. That's an individual choice to be made. What boggles my mind is when I see males in the same condition. I feel like saying: What do you think I'm going to do? Beat you up? Rape you? Pull out a gun? Have you so little rational control of your thoughts and emotions that you really think something is going to happen to you on King Street in a small town in Southern Ontario? Of course I can't say that — I'd scare the little fella into a heart attack before I had five words out of my mouth.

To me, it seems that this is the most regrettable net effect of trying to make the maternal nature into a template for society, to move it outside of the home, outside of the one-on-one mother-and-son relationship and take it to a society-wide level. I think it is far more destructive than smoking bans (second-hand cigarette smoke — in my view if a human body is so fragile that second-hand cigarette smoke is going to cause it to shrivel up and die, then second-hand cigarette smoke is going to be the least of its problems) or censorship or banning a chemical additive because consuming its body weight in the additive caused cancer in a mouse. To me this is fearfulness out of all reasonable — hell, out of all *un*reasonable proportion.

Inside the home? Well, I can only speak from my own experience, obviously. And here I can agree with David Groenewegen's original point. The fear that a mother generates in her child is only one part of the equation, one part of the fountainhead resource of a mother's love. Certainly it is out of love that a mother is so apprehensive, so fearful on her child's behalf. If a mother errs in making her child too fearful she does so with the best of motives of wanting what is best for her child — a healthful and long life topping the list.

But I think David G.'s point, the positive side of the "mama's boy" is better reflected not in the fear that she imparts to him, nor in the love which is the fountainhead source of everything maternal, but in a mother's belief. To David's list I could probably add a dozen names off the top of my head, and I would be willing to bet that each of them had mothers who believed in their abilities, who encouraged those abilities, who believed in them when they themselves didn't know that belief had anything to do with achievement, when they could see nothing in themselves to believe in or so little in themselves that belief seemed unwarranted, excessive, or at least disproportionate. Belief of that kind is not unwavering, not unshakeable. It would be nice to say that it is, but, alas, waver it does, shake it does with each disappointment, each wrongful act. But it *does* always restore itself, *is* always restored. Why? How? Well, not being a mother, I'm sure I don't have the first clue.

To me, it is the fundamental flaw in attempting to use the maternal nature as a template for society-as-a-whole. Fear is exportable. You have only to watch a

newsmagazine show on TV, read a newsmagazine or a newspaper to see that magnified fear is, indeed, exportable. Left unchecked, magnified fear can turn into fascism or can certainly endorse fascistic impulses and programs without batting an eyelash. Where safety comes first, it is very easy to make individual human rights, individual human liberty a close second, then a not-so-close second, a quite distant second, and so on. My mother has said on several occasions that she wouldn't mind giving up some freedoms if it meant that greater safety would be the result. I shudder when she says that, of course. I can't help but shudder when *anyone* says that or something like it. But I never doubt for a minute that she is sincere in saying it and that her motives are completely unselfish and her intentions are good. But it does indicate to me the exact limits of where the maternal nature can be applied to society without unravelling everything that the paternal nature has built, brick by costly brick, century by century in its philosophical progress from the cradle of the Tigris and the Euphrates to the Constitution of the United States of America.

It is unfortunate for all of us that the far more valuable commodity, belief, is not exportable. It would be hard to imagine how a community of mothers could instil belief in a community of sons. Impossible, in fact, since it would lack the crucial element of the one-on-one relationship. "All of we mothers believe in all of you sons" just doesn't seem capable of bearing fruit, does it?

Would that it were!

Would that my mother could have the kind of belief in the abilities of every aspiring cartoonist out there that she had in mine! Would that Julia Lennon could have believed in a hundred or even a dozen dreamy-eyed boys filling notebooks with squiggly little drawings and nonsense verse! Would that Gladys Presley could have seen Captain Marvel Jr. in even three other dirt-poor boys in Tupelo, Mississippi!

Alas, it doesn't work that way. It never has and it never will. What is the secret? What is the proper balance of love and belief and fear and every other element of maternal love that goes into making an over-achiever "mama's boy"? What is the proper diet? What needs to be said and when?

Who could even pretend to have the answer?

I am convinced, however, that the one-on-one relationship and belief in the *individual* boy is central to the equation.

Next: "Mama's Boy" part three.

*continued*

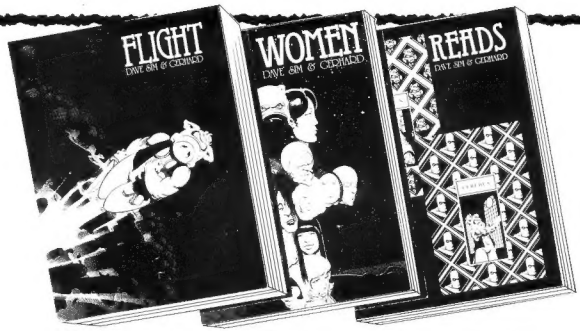
## FROM COVER

particularly those who read the posted descriptions of the individual manuscripts, could only have come away with the idea that a small sect, living in a desert self-exile far from the vital core of Palestinian Judaism, somehow wrote the hundreds of texts discovered in the caves. What occurred was a remarkable failure of intellectual leadership in a situation where it was urgently required. It was as if those responsible for the exhibition had somehow forgotten, however temporarily, the principle enunciated in John Stuart Mill's incisive observation that: it is not on the impassioned partisan, it is on the calmer and more disinterested bystander, that (the)…collision of opinions works its salutary effect. Not the violent conflict between parts of the truth, but the quiet suppression of half of it, is the formidable evil; there is always hope when people are forced to listen to both sides; it is when they attend only to one that errors harden into prejudices, and truth itself ceases to have the effect of truth, by being exaggerated into falsehood.

Last Issue's Excerpt: Hermann L. Strack, *Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash*

[1] See the observation of M. Foucault to the effect that censorship takes three forms: affirming that something "is not permitted, preventing it from being said, (and) denying that it exists." Idem, *The History of Sexuality* 1: An Introduction (New York, 1978), p. 84.

[2] The subsequent exhibition at the M.H. de Young Museum in San Francisco (26 February-29 May 1994) merely copied, on a smaller scale, basic elements of those that had preceded it, making no independent effort to give a balanced portrayal of scroll origins. This was shown not only in the way the individual scrolls were described, but also by (a) the museum's sponsorship of talks by lecturers who were well known as defenders of the traditional theory, (b) the apparent boycott of certain scholars who had taken part in the freeing of the scrolls, through exclusion of their publications from sale in the special bookshop adjacent to the exhibit, and (c) the use only of scholars sympathetic to the traditional theory as participants in the audio-guide program distributed to visitors. The audio-guide narrator was Robert MacNeil of public television, who went on record as expressing strong support for the Qumran-sectarian theory. The guide's claim that the Khirbet Qumran site and the scrolls found in the caves were organically interrelated was based on a series of overtly false archaeological assertions, discussed in my response to the exhibition that I sent to Harry S. Parker III, director of museums of the city of San Francisco, on 15 April 1994. See also my article, "The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Ethics of Museology," in the *Aspen Institute Quarterly*, no. 2 (Spring 1994), pp. 79-98.

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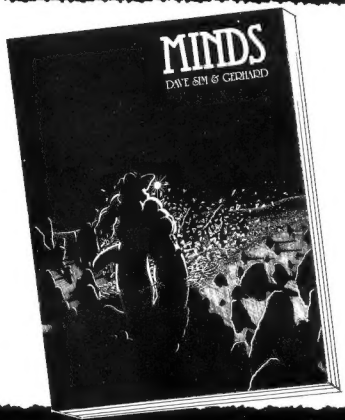


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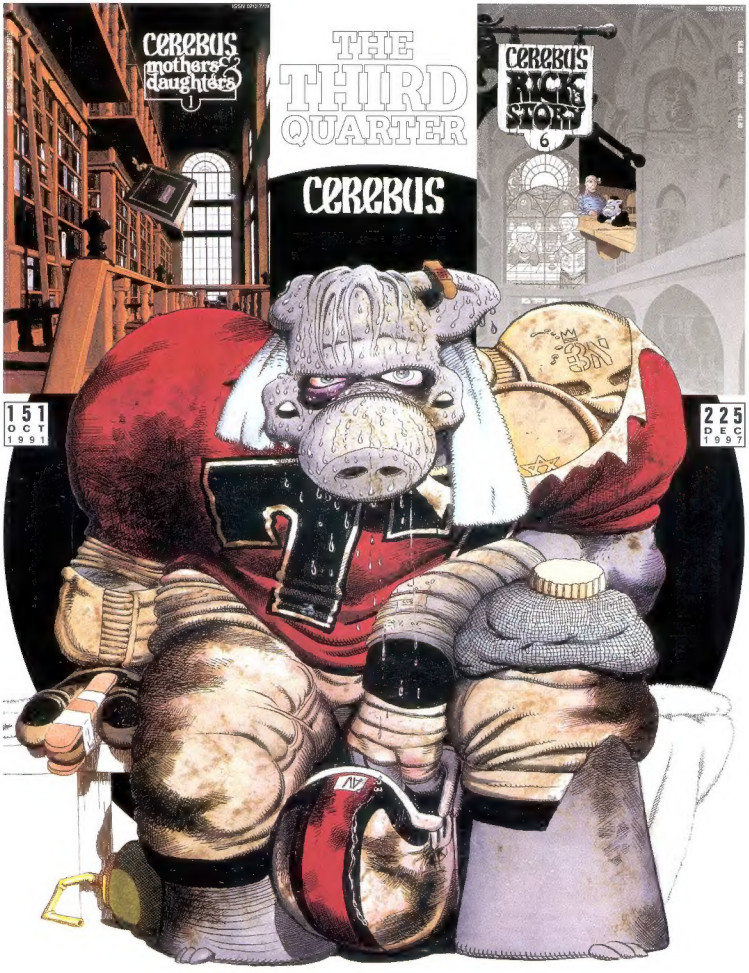


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